Dr. Prashanth N S

MBBS, MPH, PhD (Public health)

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Dated 28 December 2025

[redacted]

The District Collector & District Magistrate & Head of District Tourism Promotion Council
District Collectorate,
State Bank Road,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu – 641018.

Subject: Blatant violations of **Tamil Nadu District Municipalities (Hill Stations) Building Rules, 1993** in Valparai and the Urgent need for a Sustainable Tourism Regulatory Framework and Traffic Management System for Valparai.

I am writing to bring to your urgent attention the systemic collapse of urban planning and traffic management in Valparai. As a frequent annual visitor since 2007, I have observed that the current tourism model relies on the "externalization of costs," where private lodges and businesses maximize room inventory while shifting the burden of parking and waste management onto public infrastructure. Furthermore, the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities (Hill Stations) Building Rules, 1993, read with Annexure IV of the 2019 Combined Building Rules, makes it mandatory for commercial lodges to provide dedicated off-street parking within their own premises. They have expanded their room capacity far beyond the parking limits approved in their original site plans. I request you to exercise your powers as the District Collector to audit these licenses and seal any rooms operating in excess of their legally provided parking capacity.

1. Violation of Tamil Nadu District Municipalities (Hill Stations) Building Rules, 1993 Under **Section 217-B and 217-C (Chapter X-A)** of the Act, construction in hill stations is strictly regulated to prevent "mushrooming growth." However, many lodges in Valparai have built rooms far exceeding their on-site parking capacity. Under the **Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules, 2019 (Annexure IV)**, commercial establishments are legally mandated to provide off-street parking. By allowing guests to park on public roads and government compounds, these lodges are in direct violation of their building license terms. See for instance the blocking of the approach roads to the Valparai sub-divisional hospital & the Valparai fire station which are essential public infrastructure impacted by these violations directly hindering patient safety, public safety and putting lives at risk.

2. Misuse of Government Property and Public Spaces A glaring example of this regulatory failure is the unauthorized use of the space immediately around the [redacted] **Official Residence** as a parking lot for nearby private lodges **[See Attached Photo]**. Local lodges appear to be utilizing this space as a "private parking lot" for their guests. This is not an isolated incident but a template of how private interests are encroaching upon the public's right to safe, clear roads and pedestrian safety. It is puzzling to see public spaces outside

official residence used for private gain and blocking entry to the residence completely, and it raises questions about the oversight of public assets. When private profit is facilitated by the occupation of public land, it compromises pedestrian safety and emergency vehicle access. This is only an example and not to single out the Tahsildar's residence alone. Such violation of public spaces by private lodges facilitating parking in these places is an example of use of public spaces for private profit and oversight by the district administration is likely to make the administration unwittingly a partner of such private gain.

3. Infrastructure Strain and Environmental Impact Valparai's roads now handle **5,000–7,000 vehicles** during peak weeks—300% over their designed capacity. Furthermore, studies indicate that "floating populations" increase solid waste generation by **400%** during holidays. The town's municipality is currently subsidizing the waste management of these private lodges, which is a gross fiscal imbalance. This results in 5-to-8-hour traffic snarls on the 40 hairpin bends and completely blocks access for emergency services. Unlike Ooty or Kodaikanal, Valparai lacks dedicated parking, meaning 100% of this tourist "overflow" is absorbed by public roadsides and government compounds.

4. Impact on Solid Waste and Public Amenities Studies on the Western Ghats indicate that solid waste generation in hill stations can increase by nearly **400%** during peak holiday weeks. Research by environmental groups like the *Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment* (ATREE) highlights that floating populations generate significantly more plastic waste per capita than residents. In Valparai, the lack of a dedicated tourism-funded waste management cess means the municipal system is effectively subsidizing the waste cleanup of private commercial entities at the expense of local taxpayers.

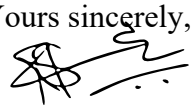
4. Requested Interventions: I urge your office to exercise powers under **Rule 217-F** to:

- **4.1 Conduct a Parking Audit:** Identify lodges that do not meet the car-to-room ratio mandated by the 2019 Rules and **seal excess rooms** until adequate on-site parking is provided.
- **4.2 Implement an Entry/Green Cess:** Ensure that visitors bringing outside vehicles contribute to the "financing burden" they place on Valparai's solid waste management. This will ensure implementation of a "Polluter Pays" principle where outside vehicles pay a seasonal entry fee dedicated specifically to Valparai's solid waste management.
- **4.3 Clear Government Encroachments:** Immediately prohibit the use of theTahsildar's residence and other public spaces for private tourist parking.
- **4.4 Designated Parking Zones:** Strict "No Parking" zones on arterial roads (such as the road to hospitals, fire stations and other essential public services), enforced by the local police, with hefty fines for lodges that facilitate unauthorized parking on public property.
- **4.5 Carrying Capacity Study:** An official assessment of the town's vehicle "absorption" limit, with restrictions implemented at the Aliyar check-post once capacity is reached.

Valparai has the opportunity to become a template for "Responsible Hill Tourism" in Tamil Nadu. By enforcing these regulations here, the Coimbatore District Administration can set a precedent for other destinations like Ooty, Kodaikanal, and Megamalai, ensuring that tourism supports—rather than destroys—the local ecosystem and resident well-being.

I request you to direct the Valparai Municipality and the Revenue Department to clear the encroachments on government residences and implement a structured parking and waste management policy before the next peak season.

Yours sincerely,



Prashanth N Srinivas

ENCL:
1. 3 photographs taken in the immediate vicinity of the official residence of the Valparai Tahsildar showing tourist vehicles parked all around and fully blocking entry to the official residence

CC to:
1. Thiru K. Easwaraswamy, Member of Parliament (Pollachi constituency), No. 12, Municipal Office Road, Pollachi, Coimbatore District, TN - 642001 (Constituency Office). Email:

2. **MLA Valparai (Vacant),** Office of the MLA, Valparai Assembly Constituency, Valparai, Coimbatore District, TN - 642127., Valparai. Email:

3. [redacted]**The Director of Town and Country Planning (DTCP),** 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Floors, E & C Market Road, Koyambedu, Chennai, TN - 600107. Email: ctcptn@tn.gov.in

4. **The Sub-collector/Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO),** Office of the Sub-Collector/Revenue Divisional Officer, Pollachi, Coimbatore District, TN - 642001.Email:

5. [redacted]**The Commissioner,** Valparai Municipality, Valparai Municipality Office, Main Road, Valparai, Coimbatore District, TN - 642127.

6. [redacted], M.E., Member-secretary, Tamil Nadu State Pollution Control Board, TNPCB Head Office, No. 76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai, TN - 600032. Email:

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